

Co-Chair Rep. Peter Fischer  
House Environment and Natural Resources  
Policy and Finance Committee  
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Saint Paul, MN 55155

Co-Chair Rep. Josh Heintzeman  
House Environment and Natural Resources  
Policy and Finance Committee  
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 16, 2026

Co-Chairs and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee,

The Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund benefits current citizens and future generations by providing long-term, consistent, and stable funding for projects to protect, conserve, and enhance Minnesota's "air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources." Minnesota voters overwhelmingly endorsed this strategy when they voted to continue sending a portion of the state lottery proceeds to the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) with 77% approval in 2024. Since 1991 ENRTF has provided over \$1.1 billion to 1,700+ projects benefiting every county in the state.

Our organizations are proud to support the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriations Bill, HF3426, which continues this special Minnesota tradition of environmental stewardship.

This bill contains the recommendations of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), a body of 17 members comprised of citizens and legislators who spend significant time reviewing proposals from across the state to inform the legislature on the best way to direct ENRTF dollars toward cleaner water, healthier forests and prairies, world-class hiking and biking trails, cutting-edge natural resources research institutions, opportunities for enrichment and environmental education programming, and abundant fish and wildlife.

In addition to advancing the recommendations of the LCCMR, we urge the committee to include the annual appropriation from the ENRTF to the Community Grant program. This program created by the legislature in 2023 and operated by the Department of Natural Resources serves as a new tool to increase the ability to "expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund, especially in communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation" (Minn. Statutes 116X.03).

Tying together both the LCCMR recommendations and the fiscal year 2027 appropriation to this program was agreed to among the co-chairs of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee; the Chair of the Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee; the co-chairs of the House Ways & Means Committee and the Chair of the Senate Finance Committee during the 2025 Special Legislative Session. As the DNR is now poised to launch this program after extensive preparation and planning, we - and the millions of Minnesotans who voted to establish it - look forward to having next year's funding available on schedule to meet the program goals.

The Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund helps entities from all over Minnesota to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's natural resources, including small towns to large urban cities, counties and watershed districts, Minnesota colleges and universities, non-profits, federal and state agencies, and more.

Thank you for your support of HF3426 and continued support of the Community Grants appropriation.

Respectfully submitted by the following organizations,

Alliance for Sustainability  
Audubon Upper Mississippi River  
Austin Audubon Society  
Brainerd Lakes Audubon Society  
Central Minnesota Audubon Society  
Climate Land Leaders  
Conservation Minnesota  
CURE  
Ducks Unlimited  
Environmental Initiative  
Environmental Justice Coordinating Council  
Freshwater Society  
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
Great River Greening  
Initiative Foundation  
Land of Lakes Bird Alliance  
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy  
Minnesota Environmental Partnership  
Minnesota Land Trust  
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter  
Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society  
Minnesota Valley Trust  
Minnesota Wildlife Federation  
MN350  
Northeastern Minnesota Bird Alliance  
Northern Waters Land Trust  
Pheasants Forever  
Prairie Lakes Audubon Chapter  
Public Policy Project  
Rainbow Research  
Sharon Nordrum, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians  
St. Paul Bird Alliance  
The Nature Conservancy  
Trust for Public Land  
University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships  
Urban Bird Conservancy  
Wilderness Inquiry  
Zumbro Valley Audubon Society